

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 AID-05 /076 W

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R 300850Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7674

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 1264

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JA, KS, MARR

SUBJECT: FOREIGN OFFICE THINKING ON US FORCES IN KOREA

REF: STATE 015830

1. DURING RECENT DISCUSSION ON BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS, EMBOFF ASKED NEA DIV DIR SEO FOR CLARIFICATION OF MIYAZAWA'S "PERSONAL OPINION" EXPRESSED TO SENATOR NUNN THAT PRESENCE OF US FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA NOT ESSENTIAL TO SECURITY OF JAPAN. SEO SAID HE WAS NOT AWARE OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARK, BUT WOULD CHECK WITH MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY TO DETERMINE BACKGROUND. SEO SAID THAT HE STILL HAD NOT HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF GOJ POLICY TOWARD KOREA WITH MIYAZAWA, AND WAS STILL UNSURE ABOUT NEW FOREIGN MINISTER'S PERSONAL VIEWS ON THIS SCORE.

2. FORMAL GOJ ATTITUDE TOWARD SIGNIFICANCE FOR JAPAN OF US TROOP PRESENCE IN ROK HAS NOT CHANGED, SEO CONTINUED. NEVERTHELESS, HE ADMITTED, THIS LINE OF THINKING IS NOT WITHOUT QUESTIONERS. HIS OWN "PERSONAL OPINION" OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE US PRESENCE IN ROK AND JAPAN'S SECURITY OSCILLATES DEPENDING ON WHETHER MILITARY OR POLITICAL FACTORS UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND. MAIN QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS EXTENT TO WHICH PRESENCE OF US FORCES

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CONTRIBUTES TO ROK STRENGTH AND STABILITY, WHICH JAPAN

VALUES SO HIGHLY. POLITICALLY, SEO SAID, PRESENCE OF US TROOPS IS WEAK POINT FOR ROK. PYONGYANG HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN DRIVING POINT HOME TO THIRD-WORLD VISITORS THAT PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS IS EVIDENCE OF ROK'S SUBSERVIENCE. FURTHERMORE, QUESTION OF CINCUNC OPERATIONAL CONTROL OVER ROK TROOPS UNDERCUTS FUTURE ROK NEGOTIATING POSITION WITH NORTH. HOW CAN ROK ASSURE DPRK THAT IT HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENT WHEN ROK TROOPS CAN BE PLACED UNDER COMMAND OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY, SEO ASKED.

3. STRATEGICALLY, ROK AT DISADVANTAGE TO DPRK, WHICH HAS ALLIES AT ITS BACK WITH SHORT SUPPLY LINES AND EXTENSIVE SANCTUARY AREAS. ROK IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE BECAUSE SUCH LARGE PROPORTION OF ITS POPULATION CONCENTRATED IN SEOUL NEAR DMZ. MILITARILY, THEREFORE, SEO CONTINUED, PRESENCE OF US TROOPS STRENGTHENS CONFIDENCE AND CAPABILITY OF ROK.

4. SEO BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT CURRENT MIX AND LEVEL OF FORCES COULD CHANGE WITHOUT AFFECTING ROK SECURITY, PROVIDED ADJUSTMENTS HANDLED WITH CARE. GROUND TROOPS COULD BE WITHDRAWN GRADUALLY, PROVIDED US AIR CAPABILITY REMAINED STRONG. ULTIMATELY, AS LONG AS ROK MILITARY CAPABILITIES STRENGTHENED AND US MAINTAINED COMMITMENT TO HELP ROK IN EMERGENCY, US FORCES COULD BE WITHDRAWN ALTOGETHER.

5. COMMENT: THOUGH SEO IS NOT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH MIYAZAWA ON THIS ISSUE, HIS MUSINGS MAY REFLECT KIND OF THINKING THAT LIES BEHIND FONMIN'S "PERSONAL OPINION". WE SUSPECT THAT SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS OUTLINED ABOVE MAY FIND THEIR WAY INTO THE GOJ PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE UPCOMING POLICY PLANNING TALKS. AT SAME TIME, WE DO NOT RPT NOT FORESEE FORMAL CHANGE IN GOJ POLICY.  
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**TAGS:** MARR, JA, KS, US  
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